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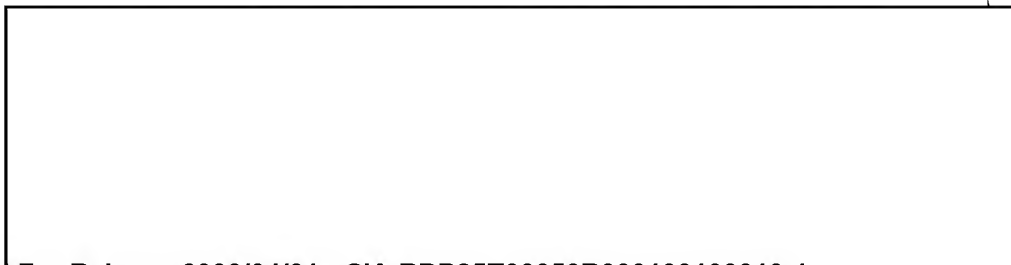
THE COMINFORMISTS AND US-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS

Neither the Cominformist plot nor other Soviet meddling in Yugoslav internal affairs is likely at this point to send Belgrade careening into the arms of the United States or the West.

--Tito's paramount interest in leaving his successors as free as possible from Soviet hostility or interference will prohibit any abrupt shift in Yugoslav policy;

--Tito has always believed that when the chips are down the West, and particularly the US, would bail him out of serious trouble from the East.

Instead of major policy changes, we are more likely to see Yugoslavia's "balanced" approach to the superpowers take on a slight but clearly perceptible tilt away from the Kremlin. This development may have been foreshadowed in Kardelj's recent description of both Moscow and Washington as "fundamentally hostile" to Yugoslavia. He stated flatly that the USSR constitutes the only real threat, and then predicted that Washington's problems with the nonaligned movement will decrease as the US comes to realize that its interests parallel those of the nonaligned countries--and by implication those of Belgrade.



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It is thus likely that the Yugoslavs will deliberately keep the door to the West at least slightly open, and we may see some probings to determine the US response to Belgrade's needs. The most immediate of these seem to be arms and money. The Yugoslavs, then, may well angle for increased Western credits and investments--and perhaps some weaponry--as they seek alternatives to their reliance on Moscow.

There is an outside chance that Soviet meddling in Yugoslavia is considerably more serious than the Cominformist affair would suggest. Tito claims to have firm evidence that the Soviets are supporting other, more dangerous groups in the country. If Belgrade comes to believe that Moscow is conducting subversion on a massive scale, there could be a precipitous swing toward the West. Tito, recognizing that he can expect no real help from his nonaligned friends, would have no alternative but to turn to the West, and primarily to Washington.

YUGOSLAV-ROMANIAN RELATIONS

Bucharest's immediate reaction to the plot dramatized the "alliance of convenience" that has characterized Yugoslav-Romanian relations since 1968. Alone among the Warsaw Pact members, Romania quickly published those portions of Tito's speech dealing with Soviet meddling. Bucharest's action scarcely veiled its concern over Soviet intentions toward its

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own independent-minded leadership.

In short order, Ceausescu dispatched Stefan Andrei, the party's leading foreign affairs specialist, to Belgrade, where he delivered a message from Ceausescu to Tito and held talks with Tito, Kardelj, and Aleksandar Grlickov, the Executive Committee's secretary for international relations. Belgrade and Bucharest also colluded in preparing for the recent preliminary meeting of European parties in Warsaw, where Andrei and Grlickov echoed each other in putting forward positions that stressed the equality of all parties and non-interference.

Although Soviet meddling in Yugoslavia has already drawn Belgrade and Bucharest perceptibly closer together, we also believe that the Balkan mavericks are working more closely in such sensitive areas as exchanging intelligence, particularly with respect to Soviet efforts to subvert their regimes.

We expect close Romanian-Yugoslav relations not only to continue but also to expand. The major limiting factor would probably be renewed conflict in the Middle East. The wars of 1967 and 1973 temporarily disrupted their relations, forcing Belgrade to honor its pro-Arab credentials in the nonaligned movement, while Bucharest chose to take a neutral stand. Since the fighting last fall, Bucharest has moved much closer to the Arabs and, indeed, toward the nonaligned world in which it professes increasing interest.

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